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# "We Are Coming"



A

## Five-Act Modern Drama

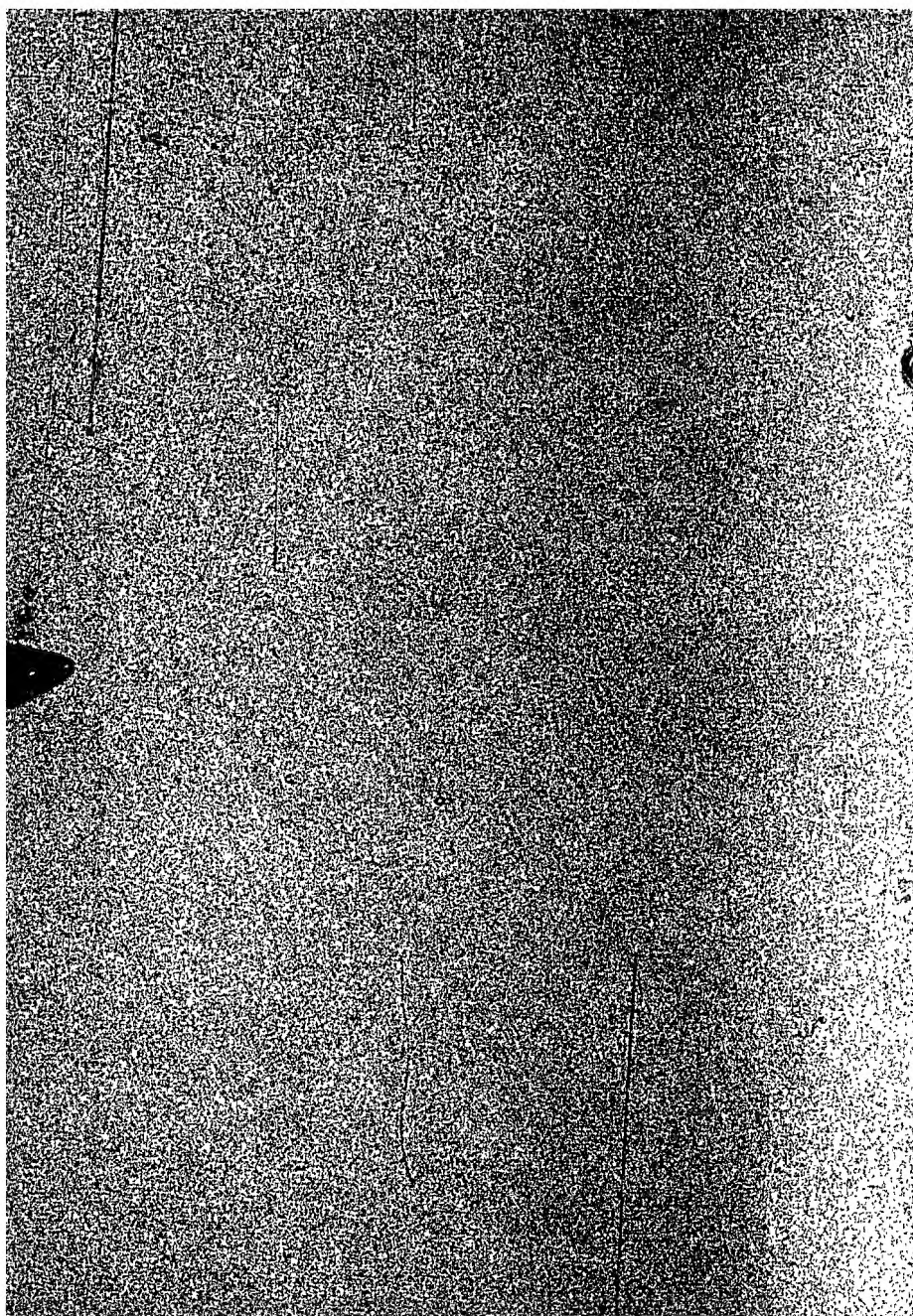
by

IDA E. POTTER



*A Clean, Wholesome Play of Uplifting Humor,  
Pathos and Music.*

*Most Suitable for Church and  
Community Amateurs*



# **“We Are Coming”**



## **A Five-Act Modern Drama**



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**by**

**IDA E. POTTER**

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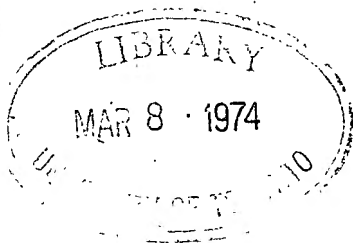
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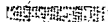
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IDA E. POTTER,  
Portage la Prairie, Manitoba

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35¢  
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# Preface

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The success of this play is assured if the characters are well chosen. The Merediths are a refined, wealthy family. Mrs. Meredith and daughter should act and dress accordingly. The twelve characters:

Mrs. James Meredith—A rather tall fine looking middle aged lady.

Mildred Meredith—An attractive looking young lady of twenty-two years.

Elsie Meredith—A winsome child of seven.

Jean—The much respected maid of modest manner, yet clever and capable. Age about twenty-eight years.

Betsy—A rather saucy looking girl. Age fifteen years.

Mrs. Dean, the widow—A refined middle aged lady of medium height.

Hal, the tramp—The hero of the plot. A young man of twenty-five years. Can play the piano well, is also one who can vividly portray the vision, which should be well done. The vision is the most important feature of the play, herein a great truth is emphasized (the coming of the children) and through it Hal becomes a changed man.

Larry McGraw—The Irish chauffeur plays an important part—A chap of medium height (about thirty years of age), a bright witty humorist.

James Meredith, Esq.—A dignified business gentleman of middle age.

Jack Dean—The widow's son (age about twenty-five years), a medical student and a fine character.

Henry Ronald Bathurst (age about twenty-eight years), dresses and acts like an English dude. As he only appears in Act IV., he could also take the small part of Sim Martin, a ne'er do well in Act II., in which case only five men would be required.

In some places it may be difficult to secure a young man for Hal's part who can play the piano. A violin or some other string instrument may be substituted and Hal could carry it around with him instead of his old grip, and the first part of the fourth act changed to suit Elsie and Hal, but the piano is preferable.

# Cast of Characters

In Order of Their First Appearance

Mrs. James Meredith	Wife of Merchant
Elsie Meredith	Daughter, Age Seven Years
Jean	A Much Respected Maid
Betsy	The Extra Morning Help
Larry McGraw	An Irish Chauffeur
Mrs. Dean	A Widow
Jack Dean	The Widow's Son
Mildred Meredith	Elder Daughter of the Meredith's
Hal	The Tramp
Sim Mortin	Betsy's Father
Henry Ronald Bathurst	An English Gentleman
James Meredith	Wholesale Merchant

Time—1919. Place—City in B. C.

## SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

- Act I. The well furnished living room of the Meredith home.  
Wednesday Morning.
- Act II. Sunnysdale Park. Same Afternoon.
- Act III. Same as Act I. Same Afternoon.
- Act. IV. Same as Act I. Following Monday Night.
- Act. V. Same as Act I. One Week Later.

## SCENES

Living Room—The living room furnished and decorated according to the refined taste of Mrs. Meredith.

Park Scene—In some communities it is difficult to get scenery. Here the walls of the living room do not need to be moved. A curtain with a pretty wood scene can be attached to hooks in the ceiling and dropped for this scene. Two painted wings placed on each side of the stage and two green park benches will be sufficient where the room is limited.

I. E. P.



# "We Are Coming"

## ACT I.

*Scene: The living-room in the Meredith home. Mrs. Meredith sitting at small table, fancy work in hand. Elsie on stool dressing her doll.*

(A Knock)

Mrs. Meredith. Come in.

(Enter Jean)

Jean. The mail, Madam. (Lays two letters on table.)

Mrs. Meredith. Thank you. (Exit Jean.)

Elsie (talking to her doll). Annabella, you are the dearest child I own. I love you the bestest of all my children, of course, every mother ought to love all her little girlies just the same—but mother, don't you think Annabella is just the loveliest dollie?

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, dear, but she is not as pretty as Julianna.

Elsie. No, she may not be as pretty, but somehow she seems to appeal to my inmost affections, and Annabella, if ever—ever—I knew that you did not love me, something inside me would just go snap, and I would just lie down and die, and all the people who would come to my funeral would say, "Little mother Elsie died because her darling Annabella broke her heart."

Mrs. Meredith. A letter from your father, Elsie.

Elsie. Oh what does he say?

Mrs. Meredith. He is at present in Toronto, and expects to be home in a few days.

Elsie (clapping her hands). Good, good! It does seem so long since my daddie went away.

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, Elsie. This has been his longest trip; we will all be glad to have him home again.

Elsie. And who is your other letter from, mother?

Mrs. Meredith. From Mr. Bathurst, Mildred's friend; he wrote me saying he would like a private interview with me, so I have invited him to dine with us this evening, and he has accepted my invitation.

Elsie. I don't like Mr. Bathurst, mother, he makes me feel all creepy-like, and he is a knocker, too.

Mrs. Meredith. Elsie, what do you mean by a knocker?

Elsie. Why one who never does anything himself, and knocks what other people do, that's what Tessie Stewart says a knocker is, and she ought to know, because her aunt, Mrs. Hunter, is a knocker, so Tessie says.

Mrs. Meredith (aside). How these children do talk! Elsie, I want you to cultivate a liking for Mr. Bathurst, he may one day be a brother to you.

Elsie. I don't want him to be my brother, mother, I would rather have Jack Dean, he is a jolly good boy.

Mrs. Meredith. I thought he went to the war.

Elsie. So he did, but he came back again, must have been wounded too, he uses a cane; I saw him on the street in the city, one day.

Mrs. Meredith (excitedly). You did?

Elsie. Yes, (rises) Mother, when is Mildred coming home?

Mrs. Meredith. I expect her on the five-thirty train, she will just have time to dress for dinner. I told Mr. Bathurst we would dine at six-thirty this evening. Run away now dear, it is time you were going for your music lesson.

Elsie. Mother, may I stop at Tessie's on my way back to play?

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, but remember, do not be later than six o'clock.

Elsie. Very well, mother, I will be home in time, (kisses her mother) Bye-bye.

Exit Elsie

Mrs. Meredith (rings bell). (Enter Jean.) Jean, has cook prepared all I told you to order for this evening's dinner?

Jean. Yes, Madam, the chicken is cooked, and the cream pies, jellies, salads, ice cream and fruit are all ready; and cook wished me to tell you that she had to go home for the day, her mother is sick.

Mrs. Meredith. Well—well, I wonder who will be leaving next. Jean, I am expecting very particular company this evening, set the table nicely, put on the best china, cut glass and cutlery.

Jean. Yes, Madam, I will, and this is my afternoon off.

**Mrs. Meredith.** So it is, I had forgotten—rather unfortunate—still you may go, and as cook is away, when you set the table you may, as well put some of the eatables on; and Jean, I have had the dining table brought in here, it can be moved over to the window at dinner time, the view is much nicer here than in the dining room. And Jean I would like you to be home by six o'clock, we dine at six-thirty.

**Jean.** Yes, Madam, I will be back in time; and Betsy says she will stay till I am ready to go today.

**Mrs. Meredith.** Well, that will help us out some.

**Jean.** Yes, indeed! (Exit Jean.)

**Mrs. Meredith** (soliloquizes). So, Jack Dean is home again, how annoying! Mildred must not encourage his attentions. (Rises, paces the floor.) Imagine my daughter marrying Katie Dean's son! No, it shall not be! A girl of her beauty and accomplishments is fitted to grace the home of any gentleman of rank, and Mr. Bathurst is so cultured, so good looking, and besides, heir to Viscount Henry Ronald Bathurst's valuable estate, also his title.

I wonder what he wishes to talk to me about this evening—I am sure he is very much infatuated with Mildred—I wish Jack Dean had not come back from the war. (Looks at watch.) One-thirty, and this is Wednesday afternoon, and there is a bridge party at Mrs. MacDougal's home from three to five. I promised faithfully I would be there—how unfortunate! Mildred away, and Jean's afternoon off—if Mr. Bathurst thought Mildred would be here, he would come early to have a walk before dinner. Well, I must go to that bridge party—I know what I will do—I will just write a note and leave it in the door. (Writes and reads aloud as she writes.)

Dear Mr. Bathurst: I much regret that I had made an engagement for this afternoon, and it so happens that my help will all be away too. I expect Mildred on the 5.30 train. Now, if you should happen to arrive before I return, please walk right in, and make yourself at home. I will not be later than 5.30.

Enclosed please find the key to this door.

Sincerely yours,

Isobel Meredith.

(Addresses envelope, reads aloud:)

"Henry Ronald Bathurst, Esq."

(Lays letter on table—looks at phone book, phones.)

Mrs. Meredith. 1106 please—City Auto Livery? I want a chauffeur to drive me to Kingsway. Must be here by 2.15. Can you send me a good capable man? Thank you. The address is J. R. Meredith, Oakvilla, Sunnysdale—yes, thank you. (Exit Mrs. Meredith.)

(Enter Betsy—gingham dress and cap on her head, takes apple out of dish on table, polishes it on her sleeve, takes a bite, puts apple in her apron pocket—dusts a chair—then the table—smells flowers in bowl on table, picks out daisy—spills water out of bowl.)

Betsy (picking petals one by one, drops them on floor). One I love. Two, I love. Three, I cast awiy. Four, I love. Five, I love. Six, I keep alwiy.

(Enter Jean, sees water spilt on table.)

Jean. Betsy, did you upset this bowl?

Betsy. No, Ma'am, it must just run out when I picked this disy.

Jean. Pick up those flowers, then go and finish your work in the kitchen.

Betsy. Yes ma'am. (Takes bite out of apple when Jean's back is turned.) Exit—dining-room door.

Jean—(Wipes table, puts on cloth also dishes and eatables, which she brought in on dinner wagon). Soliloquizes:

I cannot understand Mrs. Meredith and Miss Mildred. It is company or parties the whole continual time. If I had the money they have, I would do something for others and not spend it all on myself. It tires me to see them so selfish—there is that new auto car—but who rides in it? No one but themselves, or some of their rich friends. And to think of those beautiful flowers going to waste in the garden and conservatory. If that was my car, I would fill it with flowers two or three times a week, and go down to the city hospitals, and give them to the hundreds of poor sick children there.

We talk about the heathen and their gods, there is one big god they worship here, and that is the god "Self"—seems to me their prayers must be like a rhyme I used to hear when I was a child. "God bless me and my wife, my son John and his wife, us four, and no more, Amen." (Places screen around table.)

(Door Bell Rings)

I do wish company would not come when it is my afternoon off, I just lose an hour or two every time. (Exit.)

(Betsy enters the living room, followed by Larry McGraw, who takes a seat near hall door by which he has entered. Larry dressed somewhat after the style of the old fashioned coachman.)

**Betsy.** It is customary for men who comes 'ere to take a seat in the 'all till I take their card to the missus.

**Larry.** Oh! I beg your pardon miss, here's me card. Can you rade it? (Produces a card after much hunting in his pockets.)

**Betsy** (Looks at card disdainfully). Larry McGraw, City Auto Livery. Private residence, 604 Beasley's Hollow. Humph! (Exit Betsy, hall door.)

(Larry sits down, then rises, walks up and down, hands akimbo, sings softly.)

**Larry.**

Tune—"Nuts in May"

I loike me work just foine I do,

Foine, I do,

Foine, I do,

I loike me work just foine, I do,

In dear old Canada.

I take the ladies out in me car,

In me car,

In me car,

I take the ladies out in me car

In dear old Canada.

I drive them along wid out a jar,

Out a jar,

Out a jar,

I drive them along wid out a jar,

In grand old Canada.

The garrels are all in love wid me,

Love wid me,

Love wid me,

The garrels are all in love wid me,

In dear old Canada.

(Hearing footsteps, Larry hastens to a chair.)

**Betsy** (enters). Missus is engided, she will be here soon.

**Larry.** I thought she was a married lady, is he a nice man?

**Betsy.** Is who a nice man?

**Larry.** Why the man your missus is engaged to.

**Betsy.** My word, but you are dense! My missus is engiged fixing her blue silk dress to go hout with. Of course, she is a married lady and her 'usband is a very fine gentleman too, 'e is J. R. Meredith, Hex-mayor of the city and the owner of the large 'olesale 'ouse of Meredith and Company, and is at present away on one of his buying trips.

**Larry.** Shure and they must be very foine people that live in this house.

**Betsy** (proudly). We are that.

**Larry.** Do you like your place here?

**Betsy.** 'Spose I do, honly it's 'ard for me to know where my place is 'ere—Jean, my boss, says it's not my place to set the table, and the missus just told me it's not my place to go to the door. There's no mistake about my place at 'ome, I can do all the work I've a mind to, and all the work I 'avent a mind to.

**Larry.** Do you loike livin' in the cun-trie?

**Betsy.** Yes, I do like livin' 'ere, but this isn't the cun-trie, this is a sub-herb.

**Larry.** Is Sub-herb the name of this house?

**Betsy.** No, it isn't, this 'ouse IS called Oakvilla, and the place is called Sunnydale. This is where all the big guns live.

**Larry.** Ye don't say! Well, I often wondered where the city kept their big guns. It would be a good safe place to live if an enemy came over here—I suppose that's why ye's loike it?

**Betsy.** My word, but you are green!

**Larry.** There's a foine circus in town today, I saw it walking the streets; Oh, such foine big illiphants, and camels, and beautiful horses with such purty garrels a-ridin' them! Begorragh! If I only had a swateheart, I would take her to the show tonight.

(Steps are heard. Betsy who has been standing in the dining-room doorway, exit quickly, and Larry hastens to a chair.)

(Enter Mrs. Meredith, hat and coat on—carrying gloves, Larry's card in her hand.)

**Mrs. Meredith.** Mr. Larry McGraw, I suppose you are the man the Livery sent here?

**Larry.** Yes, Ma'am, that's who I am, Mister Larry McGraw.

**Mrs. Meredith.** Are you acquainted with the city?

**Larry.** Acquainted, Ma'am?

**Mrs. Meredith.** Yes, do you know the city well?

Larry. Oh yes, Ma'am, I was introduced to it the day I landed Ma'am, and we've been regular old pals ever since. Why, there isn't a place in the city I could not show yez, Ma'am.

Mrs. Meredith. Are you a careful driver?

Larry. Yes, Ma'am, me mother used to say when I drove her milk wagon in Kellibraw, that I was the most careful driver she ever saw.

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, Mr. McGraw, but a milk wagon and auto car are two very different vehicles. (Looks at time.) It is just two-thirty, now—(aside). The bridge party is—

Larry. Oh, I'm very careful goin' over bridges Ma'am.

Mrs. Meredith. I never said anything about a bridge, I said that the bridge party that I am going to—

Larry. Oh! I see, the Bridges are goin' to give a party and ye's want me to take ye's to it, shure, I'll take ye Ma'am.

Mrs. Meredith (puzzled). Will you take a seat in the hall a moment, please? (Opens door for Larry, returns, takes phone book, finds number, phones.) City Auto Livery? Mrs. Meredith of Oakville, Sunnydale, speaking. You sent a man here to drive my car this afternoon. Yes—well what kind of a man is he? He seems to me rather queer. Oh! just his Irish way? I see—and he is a man who can be trusted? A careful driver? That is a good recommend—very well—he will do—thank you.

Mrs. Meredith (opens door and addresses Larry). Come in please. (Enter Larry.) Now Mr. McGraw, I want to go to the home of Mrs. MacDougall, sixty-seven Kingsway, can you take me there?

Larry. Shure I can Ma'am, I can take you to Kingsway, or I can take you to the king himself, whichever you loikes.

Mrs. Meredith. Well I will just go to Kingsway today. Remember the number, sixty-seven. You will see the garage at the east side of the house, bring the car to the front gate, I will be there directly.

Larry. I will do all that Ma'am, and will you plase give me ma card back, it's the only one I've got.

Mrs. Meredith. Certainly. (Gives card.)

Larry (tips his hat and bows). I'll be ready in five shakes Ma'am. (Exit, Larry.)

Mrs. Meredith (looks at table). What a treasure our Jean is. I could not have set that table better myself. (Goes over to library table, picks up letter, reads aloud address.) Henry Ronald Bathurst, Esquire. (Takes letter. Exit).

(Curtain)

## ACT II.

*Sunnyside Park (Mrs. Dean and Jack sitting on rustic bench—both have books in hands).*

Jack. Day dreaming, mother?

Mrs. Dean. Yes, Jack, somehow I cannot concentrate my thoughts on my book today.

Jack. Same with me. This is a lovely park, isn't it, mother?

Mrs. Dean. Yes it is, I have been in many beautiful parks since I left my home in the old land. Now even this one is grander in many respects than the old home park, but, it, like all other parks, lacks something to me, that the old home one possessed.

Jack. And what is it, mother?

Mrs. Dean. I have always felt the difference, but have never realized what it was—but today, it has been revealed to me. Do you see that group of children over there, Jack, feeding peanuts to the monkeys?

Jack. Ha, ha, happy children!

Mrs. Dean. And see that other group, rolling down the grassy banks?

Jack. My, but they are having a jolly time, ha, ha!

Mrs. Dean. They certainly are. Well, Jack, those are some of the things I used to do when my older sister used to take my little chum and me to the dear old park at home; and that is why all other parks give me rather a homesick feeling—they lack the associations of my childhood.

Jack. Mother, would you like to see that old home park again?

Mrs. Dean. Would I, Jack? Oh! how I have longed to see that park again! and the dear old home! It is twenty-five years since your father and I left the old land, and I have never been back since. Father was planning just a short time before he died, to take you and me across—then—his sickness came.

Jack. I was just about nine years old, then, was I not?

Mrs. Dean. Yes—just nine; and you and I have managed to get along fairly well, but have never been able to afford such an expensive trip.



Jack. No—but mother, when I have finished my studies at college, I want to practise a while here to earn some money, and then—you and I will away to your dear old home, and all the places you loved so well.

Mrs. Dean. Oh, Jack, that will be a happy day for me!

Jack. I want to spend a year or two in the hospitals in England and France; and while I am busy there, you can have a good time with your old friends.

Mrs. Dean. Oh, that will be just great! It will be something for us to look forward to—to plan, and save for.

(Enter Mildred Meredith)

Jack. Mildred, what a surprise! You are certainly looking well. (Shakes hands.)

Mildred. I am just feeling fine, Jack, and you are looking well.

Jack. Yes—You remember mother, Mildred?

Mildred. I should say I do! Mrs. Dean, how are you?

Mrs. Dean. Quite well, thank you. Can this be the little Mildred I used to know?

Mildred. Just the same saucy Mildred. Oh, Mrs. Dean, do you remember the day I fell in the mud puddle, and soiled all my white clothes, and Jack took me home to you, and how you took them off, and put one of Jack's little suits on me, while you washed and ironed them?

Jack. Yes, and mother had to send me into another room, because you did not want me to see you. Ha! Ha!

Mrs. Dean. Happy childhood days. Do you often come here to the park, Miss Mildred?

Mildred. Quite often—but seldom alone. I have been visiting some friends at the beach for a few days, and wrote mother I would be home today on the 5.30 train, but changed my mind and came on the three o'clock instead, phoned home from the station, and got no answer, then remembered mother had an engagement this afternoon, so thought I would take a stroll through the park on my way home.

Mrs. Dean. I see.

Enter Hal—Shabbily dressed—old valise in right hand—seats himself near front of stage on bench.

Mrs. Dean (looking in Hal's direction). Jack, does he not look like Henry?

Jack. Just who he is, mother.

Mrs. Dean (to Mildred). Excuse me please while I go and speak to him.

Mildred. Certainly Mrs. Dean.

(Mrs. Dean walks over to where Hal is sitting. Mildred and Jack stroll away in opposite direction.)

Mrs. Dean. Well, Henry, how are you today?

Hal. Oh! how are you Mrs. Dean?

Mrs. Dean. I am fine Henry, and how is everything going with you?

Hal (sulkily). Same as usual, goin' to the devil! Oh, I beg pardon, Mrs. Dean, but it's the same old story.

Mrs. Dean. Have you no work now, Henry?

Hal. No, they don't hire me any more to play at the big houses or the clubs; guess I'm too shabby looking for them.

Mrs. Dean. Oh, Henry, if you would only give up the drink.

Hal. Give it up! Didn't I try? Wasn't I glad to hear when I was at the war that you good people here, had closed the bars; and didn't I save my money to make a home for that noble girl of mine?

Mrs. Dean. Where is she now?

Hal. God knows, I don't. She trusted me and gave me her earnings to put with mine, to pay on a nice little home we saw down in the West End. I went to make the payment. Say, I was as happy as a school kid that day. On the road there, I met one of the boys, he tempted me to drink. I was feeling so strong that day and so happy, I thought just one drink won't hurt me—but that was the finish of me.

Mrs. Dean. Ah, that was too bad!

Hal. Well, the upshot of it all was that I went on a spree with that fellow, and it was not long till we went through all that money.

Mrs. Dean. Henry, how could you?

Hal. I didn't, it was the devil in me.

Mrs. Dean. How long is it since you last saw your friend?

Hal. It must be near two years now, when she knew that I had broken out again, and lost all our money, she said it was no use, she would have nothing more to do with me.

Mrs. Dean. Too bad—too bad. Henry, come and have tea with Jack and me tonight.

Hal. Not tonight, Mrs. Dean, some other time.

Mrs. Dean. Well, come soon—remember I am always your friend. Good-bye, Henry.

Hal. Good-bye Mrs. Dean. (Walks away to right, turns, looks at Mrs. Dean as she walks away, then exit.)

Mrs. Dean (returns to seat she vacated—looks back where Hal was sitting). Oh, the curse of that awful liquor traffic! What a blight it has been on this fair nation of ours! Rather, aye, ten thousand times rather, that my pure boy had perished in the trenches, by the hand of our bitter foe, than that he ever lives to fill a drunkard's trench!

(Mrs. Dean sits on bench. Larry McGraw approaches from left, Mildred and Jack from right. Larry tips his hat and makes a sweeping bow to Mrs. Dean.)

Mrs. Dean. Now where is it I have seen your happy face before?

Larry. And does ye forget Larry McGraw, when I lay in yon hospital wid a broken leg, how ye brought such swate flowers and fruit to me?

Mrs. Dean. Oh, now I remember you!

Larry. Shure your kind worrids has never left me mem'ry till this day! (Looking at Jack) and shure the young gentleman knows me?

Jack. Sure I do, Larry. There are very few of us boys around the city, who do not know happy Larry. How was it now you broke you leg, Larry?

Larry. Shure it was when I was drivin' a de-livery-wagon in the city. Me horse took a fright, and upset meself and all the gro-cer-ies, sir. And a jar of molasses and a crate of eggs spilt themselves all over me, and shure whin one side of me was split wid a heavy keg, the other side was split wid laugh-ter, whin I thought of the soight, I made. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Jack. Must have been some sight all right.

Larry. It shure was, and whin I went to the hospital the nurse said she never seen such a soight in all her blessed loife. Ha! Ha! Pardin me, ladies, but I can't help laugh-in whin I think of it.

Jack. How is business, Larry?

Larry. Just foine, Mr. Dean, couldn't be better. At two-thirty, I took a grand leddy who lives a mile east of here to the city, brought two loads of young people out, and am just goin' back to the city to bring the grand leddy back again to her home. Moight I have the pleasure of taking ye for a ride to the city, Mrs. Dean.

Mrs. Dean. Well now, (looking at watch). I believe it is time for me to be going back. I have to call at the Children's Hospital with this basket: but you need not hurry, Jack, I am sure you and Miss Mildred will be happy in recalling your old school days.

Jack. Very well, mother, I will be home by six-thirty.

Mrs. Dean. Good-bye, Miss Mildred, so pleased to have met you.

Mildred. Good-bye, Mrs. Dean, I hope I may see you again soon.

Larry (picking up basket—whistles softly). "I loiike me york just foine I do." (Exit Mrs. Dean and Larry.)

Jack. Happy Larry, that is a song he composed himself, and is always whistling or singing it.

Mildred. He certainly seems a happy young man.

Jack. He is a character, it is immaterial to him what people think of his actions or dress.

(Mildred and Jack stroll away to rear of park, and disappear behind trees. Hal enters just as they leave.)

Hal. So Jack's got a girl, eh! Well, he's a mighty fine lad, got a good mother too, guess she was glad to get him back from the war. It would have been better if I had not come back—nobody cares—less it is Mrs. Dean—havn't a relation in the whole world that I know of—only ten, when mother died. Funny Dad never told me anything about his folks.

(Enter Sim Martin)

Sim Martin. Hello, old pal, 'ow are you livin—workin'?

Hal. Haven't got any work to do.

Sim. Would you do it if you had?

Hal. Course I would—I've got to work or starve.

Sim. Well, I'll tell you where you might get work. My wife washes for the Meredith's and my girl Betsy works there too; well I 'eard Betsy tellin' 'er mother last night that they want a man to 'elp in the garden and make 'imself generally useful about the place.

Hal. Meredith's—where do they live?

Sim. You go hout the park there by the Heast gate, go straight down that havenue for one mile, turn to your right, and the first 'ouse from the corner is Meredith's. The name is on the front door. I must beat it, got a date on. So long, old pal, good luck to you.

Hal. So long. (As Sim walks away Hal mutters): Call me old pal do you, fit you better if you were looking for work yourself—you old wife beater! You old park lounge! Pal! Bah! All my own fault though. (Takes a bottle out of his pocket and drinks.) Nobody cares. (Exit.)

(Enter Jack and Mildred. Takes seat Hal has left.)

Mildred. It's no use Jack, mother would not hear of such a thing. She seems to have set her mind on my marrying a man of wealth and title.

Jack. But you are different, surely those things do not count with you Mildred?

Mildred. No, I am not like mother in that respect; in fact I want to make something of myself, to be of some use in the world. Since I graduated a year ago, my life has seemed such an empty one, I am tired of pleasure seeking and entertaining.

Jack. When does your father return, Mildred?


Mildred. We may expect him in a few days now.

Jack (rising and taking hold of Mildred's hand). Mildred, may I have your permission to speak to your father in regard to my affection for you?

Mildred. Yes—Jack, you may.

(Exit Jack and Mildred.)

(Curtain)



## ACT III.

*The Living-room in the Meredith home. Hal—tipsy—has entered the room, holds letter in his hand.*

Hal. Now I must look at that letter again, to see that I made no mistake—well I'll be jiggered! It's my own name all right—"Henry Ronald Bathurst." (Takes out letter and reads aloud slowly.)

"My Dear Mr. Bathurst :

I much-regret that I have made an engagement for this afternoon, and it so happens that all my help will be away too. I expect Mildred on the 5.30 train. Now, if you should arrive ere I return, please walk right in, and make yourself at home. I will not be later than 5.30. Enclosed please find the key of this door.

Sincerely yours, Isobel Meredith."

Well, how in the name of thunder did she know I was coming out this way this afternoon. I must do as she tells me. Nice room this—yes—I will do my best to make myself feel at home. (Takes off hat, throws it on the floor—sets bag beside it—goes over to piano, plays few bars of a march—rises—walks over to table, moves screen aside, takes off serviettes that have been placed over eatables). Well, I never! Left the table all ready for me! She is the nicest woman I ever met! (Sits down.) Chicken! my favorite bird! and cream pie! Just like what mother used to make. (Pours out glass of cream, drinks.) My, that cow gives rich milk. (Picks up serviette, shakes out folds, tucks under his chin, eats heartily.)

"Have some more fruit, Henry Ronald?" "Yes, thank you—Now I don't think I can eat any more at present, Mrs. Meredy, and these are the nicest dishes I have eaten off for a long time."

(Rises, mops his face off with serviette, throws it on the table, goes into living room, plays piano and sings "For she's a jolly good fellow." Rises, looks at a picture on the wall. The door opens—enter Mrs. Meredith. She starts back—then speaks sternly).

Mrs. Meredith. Explain the meaning of this?

Hal. The meaning, Ma'am, the meaning? Why, did you not leave a letter addressed to me, tellin' me you was sorry you had to go out, and walk right in, and make myself at home?

Mrs. Meredith. That letter was addressed to a gentleman: Henry Ronald Bathurst.

Hal. Well, I may not be a gentleman, but I'd be blowed if my name is not Henry Ronald Bathurst, though everyone calls me "Hal" or "Tramp," till I most forget I have any other name—but I remember more than once, my mother tellin' me that when I was christened, she wanted to call me William John, after her brother, but dad says, "No, call him Henry Ronald, cause that's a favorite name of mine"—and mother had to do as dad said, so you see when I was born I was called 'Bathurst' after my father so my name altogether is Henry-Ronald-Bathurst. And then you said in your letter to make myself at home. So I tried my best, and your food was very good, Ma'am, the best I've tasted in a long time. (Mrs. Meredith looks at table with dismay.) Yes I thought you was the most hos-pit-a-ble—yes that's the very word Dan would say. Oh! Do you know Dan Webster?

Mrs. Meredith. No, I do not.

Hal (staggering closer to Mrs. Meredith). You don't! Well, I thought you was an eddicated lady. Well, I'll tell you then. Dan Webster is a man who wrote a book—I don't mean none of your story books, but a book with nothin' in it but words, and he not only wrote the words, but he 'splained their meaning. Like this for instance—h-a-t—spells 'hat' (picks up hat and puts on head, when he explains meaning) and then right after it, he wrote—"something to put on the head," d'ye see?

Say! My mother said she believed Dan Webster was a relation of ours, 'cause she had a sister who married a Tom Webster, and he was the greatest one for usin' big words, and my mother said she didn't believe he learnt them himself, but that he was so much with his brother Dan, that he just got sayin' them too.

Mrs. Meredith. Will you depart from my presence?

Hal. Depart from your presents! Who's touchin' your presents? Is everything in this room a present? No, Ma'am you never catch me, even if I am a tramp, takin' a thing that don't belong to me, I haven't nipped a thing in this house, but your vittles, and them I thought you meant me to take.

Mrs. Meredith. I would not like to be in your shoes when my husband comes home.

Hal (much amused—looks at his old shoes). Ha! ha! well, they are not very invitin'—are they? (Seats himself in large arm chair, throws off hat.)

Larry (appears at French window). You left your purse in the car, Mrs. Meredith. (Hands Mrs. Meredith hand purse.)

Mrs. Meredith. Oh, thank you, very much. Come in, please. This man here, entered the house while I was away, I have commanded him to leave, but he will not, will you please make him go?

Larry (coming close to Hal). Well, old man, where do you live?

Hal. Anywhere between here and the city.

Larry. Well, I am goin' back to the city now, you had better come wid me.

Hal. I will do no such a thing, this here lady wrote a letter invitin' me to come in, and make myself at home, and I am just agoin' to stay here. (Settles back comfortably in chair.)

(Elsie appears at dining-room door, looks wonderingly at Hal.)

Larry. Now none of that blatherin' talk, it's a loikely thing this foine leddy would be afther writin' to the likes of ye. Now put on your hat, and come peaceably wid me, or do you see these ere fists. (Shakes them threateningly at Hal. Clock strikes six. Hal rises slowly—puts on hat.)

Mrs. Meredith. Oh! will you leave this house?

Hal (picking up bag). Certainly, I will, Ma'am—do you imagine I could carry this house on my back? I have enough to do to look after myself, and my old bag here.

Larry. Come on here, and quit your talk.

\*(Elsie gives Hal an orange as Larry ushers him out.)

(Larry whistles "I loike me work, etc." As Larry and Hal disappear, Jean enters into living room—by dining-room door and Mildred enters by hall door.)

Jean. Oh, Mrs. Meredith—what has happened? Look at the table I set so well!

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, Jean, that horrid tramp came in when we were all away, and upset everything. Oh, Mildred my dear! (Embraces her.) Dress your prettiest this evening, we are expecting Mr. Bathurst to dinner. Jean, give us the best you can. The clock has struck six.

Jean. Yes, Madam.

Mrs. Meredith (to Mildred and Elsie). Come my dears, it is time we were dressing. Mr. Bathurst will be here soon. (She puts an arm lovingly around Elsie and Mildred. Exit.)

(Curtain)



ACT IV.

*The living-room in the Meredith home — Elsie playing piano. H. R. Bathurst, sitting in easy chair looking at book. Enter Mildred, opera cap and cloak on — is putting on long gloves.*

Mildred (going to piano, Elsie stops playing and looks up at her). Elsie, dear, I am going down to the city to the opera with Mr. Bathurst, mother and daddy are still at aunt Maud's. At half-past eight, Jean will come and take you to your room. (Kisses her.) By-bye.

(H. R. Bathurst also stoops and kisses Elsie. After he goes out, Elsie wipes off his kiss with right hand then with left, continues practising. Hal the tramp comes to French window, curtains of which are drawn aside, whistles softly an accompaniment; Elsie turns around and sees him, goes over to him.)

Hal (looking a little smarter and cleaner than he was at his last appearance). Is your father home, missie? I came to see him about getting work to do.

Elsie. No, daddy is not home. He and mother have gone down to my aunt Maud's. She was thrown out of her auto, and hurt awfully bad.

Hal. And where is your sister and her dandy beau gone to?

Elsie. Oh, he has taken her to the opera. He thinks sister loves him, but she doesn't.

Hal. How do you know she doesn't?

Elsie. Because I'm most sure she loves somebody else, anyway I want her to.

Hal (aside). So do I. Would you mind me playing on your piano, missie?

Elsie. Oh, can you play, Mr. Tramp? Well, I would rather hear you play than to practise, come right in and play.

Hal (goes over to piano). (Aside.) I don't know how it is, but somehow, my troubled soul longs to pour forth itself in music tonight. (Plays "Meditation" or similar piece, then rises quickly and goes toward French window.)

Elsie (clapping her hands). Oh, Mr. Tramp, that is just perfectly beautiful! Won't you please tell me your name. What will I call you?

Hal. Call me Hal, that's what most people call me.

Elsie. But what is your right name, your really truly name?

Hal. My right name, Missie? My right name—well, I guess it is Henry.

Elsie. Henry—Oh, that's a nice name! Well, I will call you Henry. (Slips over to table and gets an apple and orange and gives them to Hal.)

Hal. Thank you, Missie. (A bouquet of white roses is on a small table near door. Hal stoops and smells them.)

Elsie. Do you like white roses, Henry?

Hal. Yes, I do.

Elsie (picking out one). Well here is one for you.

Hal. Thank you, do you know what I will call you, Missie?

Elsie. No, what will you call me?

Hal. Angel.

Elsie. Why call me that?

Hal. Because an angel sees something good in a fellow when nobody else does. Good night, Angel.

Elsie. Good night, Henry, come again.

(Exit Hal by French window. Elsie sits in an easy chair. Enter Jean—hall door.)

Jean (looking expectantly around room). I thought I heard Miss Mildred's friend talking to you, Elsie?

Elsie. Oh, no, Jean, that was my friend. He came in after Mildred and Mr. Bathurst went out.

Jean. Why, Miss Elsie, your mother would not like you to invite friends in when she and your sister are away.

Elsie. Oh, she would not mind, Jean, if she knew how nice he is. He just plays the pi-an-o beau-ti-ful-ly, and Jean, do you know what he said he will call me?

Jean. No, Miss Elsie, what will he call you?

Elsie. He said he will call me "Angel," but I don't think he ought, 'cause angels, you know, are never naughty, and I am sometimes you, know.

Jean (sitting on arm of Elsie's chair). I had a friend once who played the piano beautifully too, and he used to call me his angel.

Elsie. Did you, Jean, and did you lose him?

Jean. Yes—I—lost—him. At least—he is lost—lost.

Elsie (taking hold of Jean's hand). Oh, Jean, I am so sorry for you. When my friend comes again, I will bring you in to hear him play. And perhaps, perhaps—he will call you angel, too.

Jean. Come dear. It is time all little girlies were in their beds. You go to your room, I will tidy here, and come right up after you.

Elsie. Come, Annabella, dear (picks up her doll). You have been sadly neglected all this night. (Hugs her.) You little sweetheart, you. (Exit Elsie.)

Jean (drops into chair Elsie was in, rests her head on her hand and soliloquizes). Why is it that thoughts of him seem to fill my mind tonight? Lost—lost? Yes, I guess he is lost to me—forever. What a strange life I have had. (Rises and tidies room.) Still I am not going to mope and fret about it. I have got my work to do in the world; my own way to make. I have neglected my duty tonight though. I promised Miss Mildred I would put Elsie to bed at eight-thirty, and here it is ten minutes to nine. But I was so interested in my book. That friend of Miss Mildred's gave me such an inspiration! Ha! ha! I have written a whole chapter since I went to my room. Wonder who it was Elsie had in here tonight? Ah, ah! I see, she has been giving fruit away again. Angel! Yes, she is the angel of this house. Bless her dear little heart! (Takes empty fruit dish. Exit—dining-room door.)

(Enter Mr. Meredith—hall door—singing "Home Sweet Sweet Home." Sits at table, picks up newspaper. Enter Mrs. Meredith, sits opposite her husband. (Fancy work in hand.)

Mrs. Meredith. Well, that might have proven a serious accident for Maud.

Mr. Meredith. Yes, but she will be all right in a day or two, more scared than anything else.

Mrs. Meredith. I am so glad you were here to go with me, James. My, it is so nice to have you home again with us. Did you find the trip very tiresome?

Mr. Meredith. Yes, rather, the war of course, has made commerce much more difficult. We used to buy quite a number of lines of goods from Germany, that now we seek elsewhere, and some of the factories in France are still closed.

Mrs. Meredith. Were you able to procure all the goods you wished to?

Mr. Meredith. Not in the old land. I, with many of our merchants have learned to appreciate more our own Canadian industries, and will therefore purchase from now on more largely in our own markets. In this respect Canada has gained much from the Great War. You seem to have been fortunate, Isobel in securing a good maid.

Mrs. Meredith. I certainly have, James; when Fanny left just after you went away, I advertised for a maid, Jean applied. I was at once impressed with her refined modest manner. She is an orphan girl, and has no relatives living in this country.

Mr. Meredith. What is her name?



Mrs. Meredith. Her name is Jean MacDonald. She was employed as a stenographer in an office in the city, but thought she would prefer the quiet, private life out here, to the more public business life.

Mr. Meredith. I see. She appears to be one who has seen better days.

Mrs. Meredith. I am sure she has. I sometimes think she has had some great disappointment in life, as at times, she looks very sad. However, she has proven a perfect treasure to me. I engaged her to be housekeeper, and overseer of the other help.

Mr. Meredith. What a contrast to her is your extra morning help, Betsy—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, I leave her entirely to Jean and cook. Her mother is Mrs. Martin, who has washed for us for the last five years.

Mr. Meredith. But, Isobel, how beautiful our daughter Mildred has grown. I notice such a change in her since I went away six months ago, and she is so much more serious, and self-possessed.

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, James, Mildred has changed, but you must remember, she is no longer a child. She will be twenty-two next month.

Mr. Meredith. Well, well, quite true.

Mrs. Meredith. I fear we will not be able to keep our daughter long, there has been a young gentleman paying her attention for the last few months—a very fine young man.

Mr. Meredith. His name?

Mrs. Meredith. Henry Ronald Bathurst, grandson of Viscount Bathurst of Berwick, Wiltshire, England. I have often heard my father speak of the beautiful estate of the Viscount's which was not so very far from our home; and this Henry is the sole heir of his grandfather's property and title. He and Mildred have gone to the opera tonight.

Mr. Meredith. And is there no one else courting our daughter?

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, there are several who would like to. There is one Jack Dean, who used to carry her books when they were children at school. He enlisted when the Great War broke out, is home now. James, you must tell Mildred she is to have nothing to do with that young man.

Mr. Meredith. Do you know anything about him?

Mrs. Meredith. I knew his mother in the old land. She married a mechanic, and they came to this country a few years after I did. Her husband has since died, and left her with this one son. I met her once or twice in the city, but it is impossible for me to recognize her.

Mr. Meredith. And were you friends in the old land, Isobel?

**Mrs. Meredith.** Well, we went to school together—yes—we were friends. Her people are very respectable, but live in a plain, simple way.

**Mr. Meredith.** And can you not be friends still?

**Mrs. Meredith.** No, James, we cannot. (Rises.) You know the society I moved in when I lived with my aunt on Broadway, then I married you, and our circle of friends are the most fashionable, and cultured of the country around. (A knock, enter Mildred and H. R. Bathurst.)

**Mrs. Meredith.** Ah! Mr. Bathurst, meet my husband, Mr. Meredith; James. Mr. Bathurst. (Mr. Meredith and Mr. Bathurst exchange greetings.)

**Mrs. Meredith** (addressing Mildred). You are home early, are you not?

**Mildred.** Yes, we did not like the opera, therefore we left early.

(A knock—Jean appears at the door)

**Jean.** Mrs. Milne wishes to see Mrs. Meredith and Miss Mildred.

**Mrs. Meredith.** Tell Mrs. Milne, Jean that Mildred and I will be there directly.

**Mrs. Meredith.** Please excuse us for a few minutes, Mr. Bathurst, Mrs. Milne was to have called earlier in the evening, but I phoned her that Mr. Meredith and I were obliged to make a call on my sister, who met with an accident. We are making final arrangements for the ball next Monday evening.

**Mr. Bathurst.** Quite all right, Mrs. Meredith, quite all right. I am sure Mr. Meredith and I will get along jolly well togethaw.

**Mrs. Meredith.** Yes, it will be an opportunity for you to become acquainted.

(Exit Mrs. Meredith and Mildred)

(Mr. Meredith offers H. R. B. a chair and seats himself)

**Mr. Bathurst** (drawing his chair closer to Mr. Meredith's). Ah, sir, this is an opportunity I have long wanted. I wish to speak to you about my attachment for your daughter, Miss Mildred, and to ask your permission to win her for my wife.

**Mr. Meredith.** I have but recently heard of your attentions to my daughter, and before granting your request, I would like to know more about you, of your past life, your intentions for the future.

**Mr. Bathurst** (patronizingly). Quite all right, quite all right. You see I am the son of the late Charles Bathurst, and grandson of Viscount Henry Ronald Bathurst of Berwick, Wiltshire; England—a very noble family, sir!

**Mr. Meredith.** Indeed!

**Mr. Bathurst.** I might just show you our family coat of arms, which I happen to have here. (Draws a small case out of an inside coat pocket, and shows Mr. Meredith.) In fact, I will tell you something which I very seldom mention—in referring to our family tree, we find that we are descendants of royalty.

**Mr. Meredith.** Well—well.

**Mr. Bathurst.** Yes, royal blood flows in our veins, but that, of course, I just incidently mention. I was educated in my fathaw's home by tutaws, when but a boy; then aftawads, my fathaw sent me to a college in London; then, my fathaw thought a year in a Canadian college would be of benefit to me.

**Mr. Meredith.** What college did you attend in this country?

**Mr. Bathurst.** I spent one year in a college in Toronto; then anxious to see this much-talked-of western country, I came on heav.

**Mr. Meredith.** And what are you doing now?

**Mr. Bathurst.** I am in a commission office, or rathaw a manufacturaw's agency. I am the proprietaw of the business—just something to keep me busy—a mere pastime, while I am studying the ways of the country—and also the people.

**Mr. Meredith.** I see, and what are your ideas in regard to the late Great War?

**Mr. Bathurst.** Ah—that war! It was very deploable, sir, very deploable! (deplorable) was it not? How those beastly Germans did upset everything! But do you know, I had perfect confidence in our Allies? I just seemed to feel from the very first, that they would save our country for us.

**Mr. Meredith.** Indeed and what did you do? Did you go overseas to fight for our country?

**Mr. Bathurst.** Well, no—I absolutely could not think of it. I was very much engaged just at that time. You see, I was President of the Golf Club, Treasurer of the Bowling Club, very much interested in a political club, and then there was my business, which I was trying to work up. Oh, no, I absolutely could not think of it. You see, I was, and am, a very busy man.

**Mr. Meredith.** Yes, a very busy man.

**Mr. Bathurst.** At one time, I did very seriously considaw going across, as I received a cable informing me of the serious illness of my honorable grandfathaw, but just the week before the Lusitania was sunk by one of those misawable tricky submarines, and I thought it would be a very foolish thing—very foolish indeed, for me to risk my life at such a time.

**Mr. Meredith.** Yes, very foolish.

**Mr. Bathurst.** But I am happy to state, sir, that my honorable grandfathaw recovered from his serious illness, and now that

travelling is made a pleasant thing once more, I am seriously considering going across very soon.

Mr. Meredith. Indeed?

Mr. Bathurst. Yes; just to see how everything is. My honorable grandfathaw is now ninety years of age, and, in the natural order of things, he certainly cannot live much longaw, and when that time comes, sir, I will inherit his vast estate, worth millions, I am told, and then, I will be Viscount Bathurst.

Mr. Meredith. Well, well!

Mr. Bathurst. Yes, I will be looked up to as an honorable gentleman—a Viscount! and your daughtaw Mildred, as my wife, will be a Viscountess—yes—Viscountess Bathurst, a real lady, and every wish of hers shall be gratified.

Mr. Meredith (rising). STOP! RIGHT THERE! Don't dare take my daughter's name between your lips again! What care I for your wealth or title, or the drop of royal blood that lurks in your veins! Understand, that in this Western Canada of ours, a man must stand on his own merit, not that of his ancestors.

(Rings bell—enter Jean.) Jean, show this man out, please. Good evening Mr. Bathurst.

Mr. Bathurst. But—but—sir—

Mr. Meredith. Go please, ere I say more.

(Exit Mr. Bathurst. Hall Door)

Mr. Meredith. MISERABLE COWARD! (Paces floor.)

Enter Mrs. Meredith and Mildred, by dining-room door)

Mrs. Meredith. Where is Mr. Bathurst?

Mr. Meredith. I told that brainless, selfish, cowardly man to go!

Mrs. Meredith. James, James! Why, what do you mean?

Mr. Meredith. Just what I have said! Isobel, are you so blinded by pride and ambition, that you have failed to see the weaknesses of that man's character? He told me that he wished to ask my permission to win our Mildred for his wife. Oh the audacity of him! (Continues to pace the floor.)

Mrs. Meredith. Why, what did he say, James, that has wrought on your feelings so?

Mr. Meredith. As I never met the man before I asked questions along certain lines, that I might form some idea of the character of the man. I find that after spending many years on his education in the old land, and a year in Ontario, he settles down contentedly in a commission office in the city, as a mere pastime, he says, waiting till his grandfather dies, when he expects to inherit his wealth and title. Then, he says, he will be an honorable gentleman—a Viscount.

Mildred. Ha, ha—Just like him!

Mr. Meredith. He could not think of enlisting during the war, because he had so much to keep him busy, he was so interested in the golf—bowling—and political clubs, and the little business of which he was the proprietor.

Mrs. Meredith. He was not the only one who did not enlist!

Mr. Meredith. Certainly not, but I never met a more contemptible or cowardly one. He received a cable informing him of the serious illness of his grandfather, and begging his return, but he could not think of it, as just the week before, he had heard of the sinking of the Lusitania, but now that travelling is made a pleasant thing once more, he is considering going across very soon. I told him he was a selfish coward and not to dare take the name of our daughter between his lips again, then I opened the door, and bade him good evening.

Mrs. Meredith. Oh James—how could you!

Mildred. I am glad you did, father. I have learned to despise him.

Mrs. Meredith. You liked him once!

Mildred. I did not mind his attentions at first, mother, when he showed such a liking for me, and all the other girls were so anxious to secure him, and then, mother, you showed such a preference for him. But as father says, when you know him better, he proves to be only a selfish coward. Mother do you imagine for one minute that I would marry a man, who, being physically and otherwise able, refused to answer his country's call?

Mr. Meredith. I am sure you could not, Mildred—and this one is not worthy of our thoughts, so we will dismiss him from our minds for the future. And now, my dear, tell me something of yourself. Have you had a good time, while I was away?

Mildred. Well, father, mother and I have been busy as usual with our card and dancing parties and afternoon teas, our pleasure riding and theatre going. Father, I used to call that having a good time, but I don't now. I am tired of it all. I wish I could train for a nurse, or go to a mission field.

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, and catch a fever, and die in a foreign land!

Mildred. Well, then, I would die doing something for some one, besides myself.

Mr. Meredith. Mildred is right mother, I too, have felt for sometime, that we are all leading very selfish lives. We give nothing in proportion to what we receive. I remember down in old Ontario, where I was brought up, that my father and mother, ay, and myself, too, used to give at least a tenth of our incomes to the church and charity.

Mrs. Meredith. Yes—James, I too remember in the old home, father and mother used to always reckon on giving their tenth.



**Mr. Meredith** (drawing his chair closer to Mrs. Meredith). And were you all happy? Did you enjoy life in those days, Isobel?

**Mrs. Meredith.** Yes, James, ours was a happy home. We found our pleasure in those days, in doing something for others.

**Mr. Meredith.** Our life in this Western land has been so prosperous in a worldly sense, and we have allowed pride and ambition to run away with our better feelings. We know nothing of sacrifice. Of our abundance, we have given but little—sacrifice, Isobel, means—giving till we feel it.

**Mrs. Meredith.** Yes, James, I too have felt the pricks of conscience, but my pride and ambition would not let me yield. My mind goes back tonight, to the dear home in the old land, and I long again for its happy simple life, and the spirit of sacrifice which characterized our home. (Enter Elsie in long kimono and bedroom slippers.)

**Elsie.** I just came to kiss you goodnight, Daddie (Mr. Meredith draws her closely to him).

**Mildred.** Father, did you not have another caller, today?

**Mr. Meredith.** Yes, Mildred, your soldier boy came to see me at the office today. He is a fine noble young man, Isobel, very modest and unassuming in his manner. Is working hard to pass his fourth year exams at the Medical College. A young man with a proper outlook on life, and one we should be proud to call our son, Isobel. You both have my heartiest wishes for your future welfare, Mildred.

**Mildred.** Thank you, father, and have we yours, mother?

**Mrs. Meredith.** Yes—Mildred, you have. I cannot wish for you the empty society life which now to me has become so distasteful, nor the regret which I now experience for years of our home life, wherein we might have done so much good for others. My highest ambition was to see you married to a man of rank and wealth. I feel, James, that we would all have been much happier, if it had not been for my foolish ambition.

**Mr. Meredith.** Thank God, our eyes have been opened to see the selfishness of our ways.

**Mrs. Meredith.** Yes, indeed, now we will try to redeem the time by devoting our lives and means for the good of the needy. Let me see—this is Monday—Mildred, is Jack in the city for long?

**Mildred.** No, mother, he leaves next week to attend college in the east.

Mrs. Meredith. I would like you to phone, and invite him to spend Wednesday evening with us, and Mildred, tell him to bring his mother with him. I would like to meet Katie again. She was always a good true girl, and I would enjoy a talk with her about the good times we used to have in the dear old home land.

Mildred (embracing her mother). Mother, you are a darling!

Elsie. Mother, may I invite my friend to come too?

Mr. Meredith. Has my little Elsie got a friend too, and what is his name?

Elsie. Most people call him 'Hal' or 'Tramp' but his really truly name is Henry. You know, mother—that man who came in the day we were all away? He was here tonight.

Mrs. Meredith. Elsie, you don't mean that horrid tramp was here again tonight? Did Jean see him?

Elsie. No, just me. He came to see daddie about work—and he isn't horrid mother. He is just lovely, and plays the pi-an-o most beau-ti-ful-ly!

Mildred. Jack and Mrs. Dean know him, mother. Suppose I ask Jack to bring Hal with him?

Mrs. Meredith. Very well.

Mr. Meredith. Then, I will have a chance to see my little girl's friend, eh?

Elsie. Oh daddie, you will like him, and you will be so pleased to hear him play the piano.

(Curtain)



ACT V.

*The living room. Mrs. Meredith seated in easy chair, fancy work in hands. Mr. Meredith, sitting by table, addressing Larry McGraw who is standing.*

Mr. Meredith. And you have decided to accept the position, Larry?

Larry. Yes, sir, I have given me notice, and I will be here to-morrow morning.

Mr. Meredith. I am glad to hear that.

Larry. Yes, sir, and I am shure I'll loike me job.

Mr. Meredith. I sincerely hope so. (Opens door.)

Mrs. Meredith. Good night, Larry, I am so glad you are coming.

Larry. Thank ye, Ma'am. Good night. (Exit Larry.)

Mrs. Meredith. I am so glad he is coming. I am sure you will like him.

Mr. Meredith. He has a good honest face.

Mrs. Meredith. And I believe he is just as honest as he is happy.

(Mr. Meredith seats himself opposite his wife)

Mrs. Meredith. James, I have been busy yesterday and today, trying to become better acquainted with our help.

Mr. Meredith. Splendid idea, Isobel, and what have you learned?

Mrs. Meredith. Very, very much, that I had no idea of. I find that Sarah, our most excellent cook, while she is busy making good dishes for us to eat, is ever carrying about with her a sad heart.

Mr. Meredith. Is that so?—what is the cause?

Mrs. Meredith. Her mother, to whom she is very much attached, is afflicted with an incurable disease, and is not expected to live more than a few months.

Mr. Meredith. Ah, that is sad.

Mrs. Meredith. Then I called on Mrs. Mortin.

Mr. Meredith. Mrs. Morton—who is she?

Mrs. Meredith. Our washerwoman—Betsy's mother. Poor woman, she is heartbroken. She has four boys younger than Betsy. Her husband is a drunkard. She showed me bruises on her arms where he had beaten her to get her money for drink. All the means she has for keeping her home together is what she and Betsy earn.

Mr. Meredith. Dreadful, dreadful!

Mrs. Meredith. You see, James, if Mrs. Martin was a widow, she would get help from the government—the "Mother's Allowance Fund"—but being only a drunkard's wife, she gets no help from that source.

Mr. Meredith. No, there is no compensation for the drunkard's wife. She and her family must endure and suffer.

Mrs. Meredith. Yes that is the sad part of it. I am going to raise Mrs. Martin's wages, also Betsy's. I am giving Betsy more work to do. I have engaged her for this evening.

Mr. Meredith. Good idea! And now, what else did you find out? Have you become better acquainted with Jean?

Mrs. Meredith. I certainly have, James. Jean has a sorrow in her life as I suspected, but of that I cannot tell you just now. But one thing, I have learned, that is—she is a girl of very fine character and one who has very high ideals.

Mr. Meredith. I can see that.

Mrs. Meredith. She also confessed to me, that she did not tell me all the reasons she had for accepting her position here. she had another.

Mr. Meredith. And what is that?

Mrs. Meredith. She is writing a book, and in order to get data for it, she wished to come more in contact with the wealthy class.

Mr. Meredith. Well, well, and what is the name of the book?

Mrs. Meredith. The title is "The Way of the World." She has promised to let me read it, when she finishes it, and James, from now on, as long as Jean will stay with us, I will treat her as a companion—a companion help.

Mr. Meredith. Do you not think, Isobel, if more women treated their female help as companions, it would solve a good many problems?

Mrs. Meredith. In some cases, James, not all. I told Jean I would like her to come in tonight, and be one of our little house party, and Elsie is very anxious for her to hear Hal play, but she is afraid Betsy could not get along without her, and said she will come in later in the evening.

Mr. Meredith. I see. Isobel, with that dress on, you look about as young as the first night I saw you, only then you wore pink roses. (Rises, picks pink buds out of a vase. Gives them to Mrs. Meredith.) And now, Isobel, will you not sing me one of my old favorites?

Mrs. Meredith. And what shall it be, James? (Goes to piano.)  
(Enter Mildred)

Mr. Meredith. "Just a Song at Twilight."

Mrs. Meredith (plays and sings one verse, Mildred and her father join in chorus. Mrs. Meredith then rises and stands beside her husband.)

Mildred (bowing low to her mother). Ah! does she not look beautiful tonight, father? Just like a queen!

Mr. Meredith. And she is a queen, Mildred, Queen of her home, our Queen.

Mildred. And you are the King of our home, father—our King. I am proud of both of you; and now, most gracious majesties, I have a humble request to make of you.

Mr. Meredith. Speak, pretty Princess, and thy request shall be granted—even to the half of my—

Mildred. Be careful, father, I may hold you to it. But all joking aside, most worthy parents, my request is an urgent one.

Mrs. Meredith. And what may it be, my dear?

Mildred. I would like Sarah to have a holiday—a whole month to spend with her poor sick mother.

Mr. Meredith. And what will we do without our good cook?

Mildred. I will take her place.

Mrs. Meredith. Why Mildred, you have never had the least experience.

Mildred. Well, don't you think it is about time I had, especially when I am going to marry a poor man. I will have to know something about cooking, and Jean says she will help me.

Mrs. Meredith. And I will, too. Yes, Mildred, tell Sarah she can go in the morning. I will see that she gets her check before she goes.

Mildred. Thank you, mother. I must hasten and tell her.  
(Exit Mildred dining-room door.)

Mr. Meredith. And make Sarah's check a good one, Isobel, sickness these days runs away with a lot of money. Pay her for her holidays in advance. (Door bell rings.) Ah, our guests!

Mrs. Meredith. Yes, let us go and welcome them. (Exit Mr. and Mrs. Meredith, hall door, Larry appears outside of one of the French windows. Betsy appears in living room from dining room. Larry whistles. Betsy walks towards window.)

Larry (sings).

I've come t' Oakvilla to stay, always,  
Stay, always,  
Stay, always,  
I've come t' Oakvilla to stay, always,  
In dear old Sunnysdale.

Betsy—

I'd like to know, who asked you to come,  
You to come,  
You to come,  
I'd like to know, who asked you to come,  
To dear old Sunnysdale.

Larry—

The master himself, told me to come,  
Me to come,  
Me to come,  
The master himself, told me to come,  
To dear old Sunnysdale.

Betsy—

I hope you find your place, young man,  
Place, young man,  
Place, young man,  
I hope you find your place, young man,  
In dear old Sunnysdale.

(Larry tips his hat to Betsy and backs away keeping step to tune. Betsy backs to dining-room door, stepping to tune.)

Larry—

Oh, I loike me work just foine I do,  
Foine I do,  
Foine I do,  
Oh, I loike me work just foine I do,  
In dear old Sunnysdale.

(Exit Larry and Betsy. Enter Mrs. Meredith and Mrs. Dean into living room, hall door.)

Mrs. Meredith (placing rocker for Mrs. Dean). Just be seated, Katie.

Mrs. Dean. Thank you, Mrs. Meredith.

Mrs. Meredith. Call me Isobel, please. Let us forget the past years in this country, as far as my foolish pride is concerned—and be friends again as we were in the olden days, Katie.

Mrs. Dean. The dear olden days, Isobel, and the dear old home land, how often I think of them.

(Enter Mildred and her father—dining-room door)

Mildred. Where are Jack and Hal gone?

Mrs. Meredith. Elsie has taken them out to see her pony, before it gets too dark. (Mildred and her father take seats.)

Mildred. Mother had quite an experience with Hal or Henry as you call him, Mrs. Dean. Did Jack tell you about it?

Mrs. Dean. Yes, he did. I am afraid Henry was very much under the influence of liquor that day. He came to visit Jack and me last evening. He talks of a vision he had. I believe a great change has come over him. When I am convinced of that, I have papers left me by his father to give him.

Mrs. Meredith. You knew his father?

Mrs. Dean. Yes, I met him a few times in the old land. My husband and I met him accidentally one day in the city. When he saw that I recognized him, he came and spoke to me. He visited us occasionally afterwards, and, for his father's sake as well as his own, I have always taken an interest in Henry. (Enter Jack, Elsie and Henry.)

Elsie (taking Henry's hand.) Now, Henry, come and play for us, please.

Henry (smiling at the rest). Yes, Angel, I will. (Plays a classical selection. When finished, Mr. Meredith puts his hand on Henry's shoulder.)

Mr. Meredith. Well played young man—you have a great talent. You ought to be filling a better position than what you are. Do you never long for a home of your own, with your wife and little ones around you?

Henry (rises and walks away from piano, then faces Mr. Meredith). Long for a home! God knows how I longed for a home! I had a sweetheart once, as good a girl as ever lived in yon city; but I have been a victim, sir, of that cursed liquor habit, and I could not save money for a home. But thank God, the taste for that accursed stuff has left me. I stand before you all tonight a changed man—I have seen a vision.

Mr. Meredith. Indeed! We would like to hear about it, if you would care to tell.

Henry. A week ago today, sir, I came to your place looking for work; I had been drinking that day. All I can remember is,

that when I came to the front door to see if your name was on it, I saw a letter addressed in my name—after that everything is a blank. Jack has told me what happened, and I most humbly apologize to Mrs. Meredith for my rudeness.

Mrs. Meredith. I forgive you, Henry, you were not yourself that day.

Henry. Thank you Mrs. Meredith. Well, that kind chauffeur Larry McGraw, who took me from here, instead of taking me to the police station, as I deserved, drove me to his own lodging place and has let me share his room ever since.

Jack. Good for Larry, just like him!

Henry. Well, Monday night, I came here again, to see you sir, but you were not at home.

—Mr. Meredith. So I understand.

Henry. This little angel child of yours gave me a beautiful white rose. I went back to Larry's room—he was out—was working late that night. I sat on the bed for a long time with that rose in my hand—how perfect it was—how pure—I thought how much like that rose was your little girl, so beautiful, and pure.

Then I must have fallen into a trance—it seemed as if I was walking along a narrow road, when suddenly I came to a charming little lake, which was surrounded by beautiful shapely ever-green trees, with the exception of about twenty feet in front of me of a sandy beach. I seemed enchanted by those clear waters, and took my boots off, and waded out. I had not gone far when I heard someone from the shore call out. "Come back! Come back! Don't you know that is quick-sand?" I said, Ha! ha! I am going to have a swim. But suddenly to my horror, I found myself sinking—sinking in the quicksands. Then I called loudly for help, but no one came. I looked across the lake, and I saw others there sinking—sinking. Sim' Mortin was one of them, but I could only see his head and shoulders above the water. Then as I faced the shore, suddenly the heavens seemed to open, and I saw a great number of children, high above me, but coming towards the lake; they were singing—

"We are coming, we are coming,  
We are millions strong."

"My God," I cried; "Keep back the children, don't let them come." Then I struggled with all my might, and finally I freed my feet and waded in to shore. On the shore were a lot of men walking. I pointed to the skies and said, "Look! Look at the children coming!" But they only laughed and said, "We don't see any children coming." And I said, "Don't you hear them?" and they said, "No, we don't hear any children." But I said, "They are coming. I both see and hear them. This lake must



be closed, or they will go in, and be lost in the quicksands." Then they said, "Don't you know this lake is a great revenue to our country—if we closed these waters the population of our province would decrease."

"Ah," I said, "do you want your population increased by wretches like myself, and those who are sinking out there? Look after the welfare of the children of our land, and you need not fear for your population." But those men just walked along, and talked, and planned how they would cut down more trees, and broaden the shore, so that more people might come and indulge in its waters.

I looked in the direction of the children, now they had descended to the road, and were coming on—on—straight towards the lake. YOUR LITTLE GIRL WAS THERE, SIR and Oh, so many about her age, and they were joyfully singing—

"We are coming, we are coming,  
We are millions strong."

There were tiny little tots about three years of age, and they too sang—

"We are tumin, we are tumin,  
We are millions strong."

Then, sir, I awoke, and the perspiration dropped in great beads from my forehead, so great was my agony, at the thought that the children were coming, and that lake was not closed.

Mrs. Meredith. That was a wonderful vision, Henry.

Mrs. Dean. It certainly was, can you interpret it, Henry?

Henry. I can.

Mr. Meredith. I am sure we would all be pleased to hear you.

Henry. That lake, sir, is the Lake of Self-Indulgence.

Mr. Meredith. What form of self-indulgence, do you consider the most harmful?

Henry. That which was my ruin, the indulgence in alcoholic drink. There are others such as the gambling and the drug habit.

Mrs. Dean. The illicit drug traffic is attracting a good deal of attention today. I see where some of our provinces are raising large sums of money, to combat with that evil.

Mr. Meredith. Alcoholic liquors should be treated as a drug, and a drug which has been proven is not a necessary one, and if the manufacture of it is allowed, why cannot it be put on the market as any other drug? Yes—and when sold, it should be labelled POISON. Does it not poison the mind? Under its influence, men have become robbers, wife-beaters, forgers, murderers. What other drug is more deadly?

Jack. I agree with you Mr. Meredith. It should be treated as a deadly poison.

Mrs. Meredith. How would you suggest that this "Lake of Self-Indulgence" be entirely closed, Henry?

Henry. It will only be closed when the people, (and I believe there are enough such, who call themselves "Christian") will open their eyes, and behold the vision of the coming children, and build around that lake a strong wall of total prohibition.

Jean (who has been standing behind a screen, now walks over and stands in front of Henry—holding out her hands). HENRY!

Henry (clasping Jean's hands). Jean! Jean! Is it you? MY long lost Jean?

Jean. Yes, Henry. It is me—your Jean.

Henry. Can you forgive me for the past, Jean?

Jean. Yes, Henry, I do, and Oh, I am so happy that your eyes are at last opened, and that you have been saved from the quick-sands!

Henry. Forever saved, Jean. That vision was a wonderful revelation to me, and now I abhor the very thought of the accursed stuff. I never want to taste it again. (Drawing Jean to him puts his right arm around her.)

Elsie (taking hold of Henry's left hand and looking up into his face). Henry, is Jean your angel too?

Henry. Yes, Elsie, Jean is my angel too.

Elsie. Henry, mother says an angel is one who watches over us and helps us when we would do wrong. So now you have two angels to watch over you.

Mrs. Dean. "A little child shall lead them." (Then offering her hand to Henry.) Henry you have indeed made me happy tonight. (Drawing a document from a fancy bag she hands it to him.) Here is a document Henry, given me by your father on his dying bed, which will be a revelation to you.

Henry (takes document). (Reads aloud, all listen.) "This is to certify that I, George Albert Bathurst, am the eldest son of Viscount Henry Ronald Bathurst, Berwick, Wiltshire, England. This document is to be given to my only son, Henry Ronald Bathurst, when he becomes twenty-one years of age, IF he be a young man of GOOD HABITS, and worthy to be the grandson of my honorable father.

I hereby appoint my trustworthy friend, Mrs. Dean, to be the sole executrix of this, my dying wish.

Signed, George Albert Bathurst

Henry. Mrs. Dean, what does this mean?

Mrs. Dean. Just what it says, Henry. Your father was the eldest son of Viscount Bathurst, and he, being deceased, you are the lawful heir of the Viscount's estate, also his title.

Henry. Why did not my father ever tell my mother, or me, anything about his relatives?

Mrs. Dean. By some misdemeanor at college, your father had displeased your grandfather, who sent him to this country and bade him not to come back again. Your father married shortly after coming to Canada, and as you know, you are the only son of that marriage. Your father never communicated in any way with his people.

Henry. And you never told me any of this before, Mrs. Dean.

Mrs. Dean. No, Henry. When you reached the age of twenty-one years, owing to your slavery to the liquor habit, I could not tell you, as your father did not wish it. You see, he says, "If you are a young man of GOOD HABITS."

Henry. Good, Mrs. Dean! You have been a loyal friend both to my father, and myself, I have much to thank you for. But tell me, who is that other fellow whose name is the same as mine? ~~I never~~ heard of him till Jack told me last night.

(Exit Jean—hall door)

Mrs. Dean. He is a son of a younger brother of your father's and therefore, is your cousin. Not knowing of your existence, he believes himself to be the rightful heir of Viscount Bathurst.

Henry. I see. (Misses Jean. Elsie pulls his sleeve and motions to hall door—exit Henry.)

Mrs. Meredith. Henry is fortunate in finding his long lost Jean, I am very fond of her, I hope he does not rob me of her too soon.

Mr. Meredith. I believe a happy future is before them.

Mildred. That was a wonderful vision.

Mrs. Dean. It was a great revelation. The Captain of our souls moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.

Elsie. Isn't it just lovely that Jean is Henry's angel too? Oh, here they are! (Enter Jean and Henry.)

Jack (offering his hand to Henry). Congratulations, old man, I suppose you will be leaving us soon to cross the ocean, and become acquainted with your grandfather, Viscount Bathurst, and proclaim yourself his heir.

**Henry.** No, Jack, I will not. Let he who will seek fame and fortune. I have caught the vision! I have seen the children coming! I have fought with you, Jack, on the battlefields of France, to save this grand old Canada of ours from the hand of a bitter enemy, will you not join with me, and Jean, in this great fight to close forever that "Lake of Self-Indulgence" to build around it a strong wall of total prohibition, that the children of our land shall not sink in its quicksands, that Canada shall be a fit place for her children to live in?

**Jack.** Here is my hand, comrade, gladly do I enter this battle with you. Will you not join us, Mildred?

**Mildred** (stepping to Jack's side). With all my heart, Jack—Henry, I want to thank you for what you have told us tonight. I too, have caught the vision—my life work has been revealed to me. Right here, in this my native land, my mission lies. This Canada of ours must be made a safe place for her children.

**Mr. Meredith.** It seems to me, that the great Captain of the universe is calling His people today to mobilize. A battle of right against wrong is now on. Let us fight with all our might, that Right shall win in this Canada of ours, that she may be in every sense a land both fair and free. Most heartily, do I enlist with you my dear young friends, in this battle. Mrs. Dean, I know has already enlisted.

**Mrs. Dean.** Yes, but I want to re-enlist in this splendid company (Joins the group).

**Mr. Meredith.** And we need you, Mrs. Dean. Isobel, you will join us?

**Mrs. Meredith.** Yes, for I, too, have caught the vision, (joins the group with Elsie holding her hand). I have just been thinking what a responsibility rests with us at this present time—we, who have the right to vote. What will these little ones think of us in coming years, if we seize not this great opportunity, and do our utmost to wipe out these evils which are menacing our land?

**Mrs. Dean.** Yes, that is the question. What will the children think?

**Mr. Meredith.** Our actions today, will do much to influence the future of our children. Let us be loyal to them, and then, we will in the truest sense, be loyal to our own province and our Canada.

(Curtain)

Curtain is raised when all the cast appear, and sing "Oh, Canada!" Audience join in.

THE END

